

REMARKS

Summary of Office Action

Claims 1, 2, 5-16, 27, 29-39, 41, 43-46, 49-54, 64, 65, 67, 72, 73, 76, 78-85, and 87 were pending in this application.

The Examiner allowed claims 2, 5-16, 45, 46, 49, 67, 72, 73, 76, and 78-85.

The Examiner objected to claims 30 and 50-54 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 and 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Herrington et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,379,363 (hereinafter "Herrington"). Dependent claim 64 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Herrington.

Claims 27, 29, 31-36, 39, 41, 43, and 87 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lerch U.S. Patent No. 5,800,436 (hereinafter "Lerch"). Dependent claims 37, 38, and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Lerch.

Summary of Applicants' Reply

Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 2, 5-16, 45, 46, 49, 67, 72, 73, 76, and 78-85, and the indication that claims 30 and 50-54 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicants have added new dependent claims 88-99 and have amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of dependent claim 50, which has been accordingly canceled. Dependent claims 51, 52 and 54 have been amended to change their dependency from canceled claim 50 to claim 1.

Applicants also have amended independent claim 27 to include the limitations of dependent claims 29 and 30, which have been accordingly canceled.

No new matter has been added.

Reconsideration of this application in view of the amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejections of Claims 1, 64, and 65

Independent claim 1 and dependent claim 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Herrington, and dependent claim 64 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Herrington.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 50, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (there were no intervening claims). Claim 50 has been accordingly canceled.

Independent claim 1 should now be allowable and, therefore, dependent claims 64 and 65, which both depend from claim 1, should now also be allowable (i.e., dependent claims are allowable if their independent claim is allowable).

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1, 64, and 65 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a) be withdrawn.

Rejections of Claims 27, 29, 31-39, 41, 43, 44, and 87

Independent claim 27 and dependent claims 29, 31-36, 39, 41, 43, and 87 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lerch. Dependent claims 37, 38, and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Lerch.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 27 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 29 and 30. The Examiner indicated that claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (i.e., claim 27) and any intervening claims (i.e., claim 29). Claims 29 and 30 have been accordingly canceled.

Independent claim 27 should now be allowable and, therefore, dependent claims 31-39, 41, 43, 44, and 87, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 27, should now also be allowable (i.e., dependent claims are allowable if their independent claim is allowable).

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 27, 31-39, 41, 43, 44, and 87 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn.

Objections to Claims 30 and 50-54

Dependent claims 30 and 50-54 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

These objections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, claims 30 and 50 have been canceled, rendering moot the objections thereto.

Dependent claims 51-54, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, should now be allowable because claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of objected-to claim 50. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the objections to claims 51-54 be withdrawn.

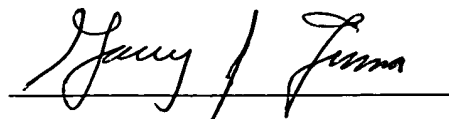
New Claims 88-99

New claims 88-99 depend from allowed claim 45. Accordingly, dependent claims 88-99 should also be allowable (i.e., dependent claims are allowable if their independent claim is allowable).

Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 1, 2, 5-16, 27, 31-39, 41, 43-46, 49, 51-54, 64, 65, 67, 72, 73, 76, 78-85, and 87-99 are allowable. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are accordingly respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garry J. Tuma", is written over a horizontal line.

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